

Executive Cabinet Meeting Notes

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

9:00 a.m.

Present: Dr. Carlos Hernandez, President; Dr. Bernardo Canteñs, Executive Vice President and Provost; Michelle Lancaster, Director of Academic Affairs; Ben Telesca, VP for Student Affairs; Dr. Suzanne Harris, Dean of Students; Amanda Workman, Athletic Director; Betse Esparza, Director of University Communications; Dr. Eric Funasaki, Dean; Dr. Bonnie Warnock, Dean; Dr. Barbara Tucker, Dean; April Aultman Becker, AVP Institutional Effectiveness; Natalie Sandoval, Executive Director of Enrollment Management; Jacob Fuentes, Chief Information Officer; Dr. Kathy Stein, Assistant Dean of Student Success; Janice Espinoza-Valenzuela, recorder

Remote: Dr. Jorge Garza, VP for Administrative Services and COO; Dr. Louis Harveson, Associate Provost of Research and Development; Karlin DeVoll, Director of Human Resources

Absent: Dr. Patricia Nicosia, Associate Provost; Dr. Sarah (Sally) Roche, Interim Dean; Dr. Laura Payne, Dean; Bonnie Albright, VP for Finance and Operations; Paul Herring, Vice President of Advancement

Start Time: 9:03a.m.

Lobos LEAD

- Mission-to provide students, faculty, and staff of Sul Ross the opportunity to work together to create a campus environment that promotes learning, belonging, and serving.
- Share graduates with community to help them grow and feel more confident when they leave us. We also grow and learn as we work with our students.
- It becomes a program where we are breaking down silos between staff and faculty within the academic side. We are working together to create this environment that promotes learning, belonging and serving.
- Elements:
 - Learning-lifelong learners
 - Earning-earning income
 - Assisting-assisting others
 - Developing-developing as an asset to the community they live in.
- Programs under the Lobos LEAD:
 - Connecting with students for success-started in Fall of 2022 by Dr. Qvarnstrom. This program asks us to learn our students' names and to meet with our students early and at least once a semester. Let them know we are here for them and that they may ask questions. Let them know that they can approach us, as we are a good resource for them. It asks them to provide timely actionable feedback early that has some weight to it. Freshmen don't know how to be students yet. Let them know they have Lobo Den with tutors, Blackboard. There were 20 students in the 2022 cohort, 22 in the spring cohort. There will be approx. 60 people who will be introduced into the classroom.
 - Faculty Mentoring Program-Barbara, Bernie and Kathy were on the task force subcommittee for student success for a faculty mentoring program. Pilot program in the spring that included volunteer faculty members mentoring up to 10 students to mentor with a minimum of 4 students. Most students were second semester developmental ed freshmen. They are At-Promise students: students that have the promise of getting to graduation. They have what they need, they just need to know that they have it. 13 faculty mentors in spring and 76 students. 25 faculty mentors in fall and 153 students paired. ONE STRONG RELATIONSHIP. All of us need to have those relationships with students. Allowing SRSU 1101 faculty members

have the first pick of students. They may not come to the office in droves, but when they have a problem, they come to the mentors. Students do pay attention to emails for business. We don't know that they pay attention because they don't respond. They only text for fun-this is why they don't provide their phone numbers to us.

- First Year Experience (SRSU 1101) Revamp-no one had ownership of this course and it showed with our students, as it was considered by students as a class with no meaning. Asking faculty for some consistency of what is going to be taught. The task force came up with a list of assignments that will be taught. We require faculty to go to training on what they should be teaching. Part of what they are asking is for them to show leadership and service. One way to show service is having a campus clean-up event the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, November 20 at 9:00 a.m. They are inviting the city, Faculty Assembly, Staff Council and students. Dr. Hernandez asked how they came up with that specific date. Dr. Stein mentioned that we have a lot of students that disappear before Thanksgiving, so we wanted students to have the opportunity to come together and see us working together. This project will be 10% of their grade and we want them to come back before finals. Dr. Hernandez mentioned that the week before Thanksgiving is the Board of Regents, and they will not be able to participate.
- Lobo Leadership Program-High impact practice is having the first-year seminar. During the First Year Seminar, they are asking faculty to identify freshman that can be good leaders. We will ask 20 students to be good peer mentors and they will get a small stipend. Recommended by faculty. We want those same students that have struggled to be the ones that assist since they have gone through the struggles. The peer mentors will only work 4 to 19 hours a week. This will allow student athletes to work.
 - First Semester the student attends SRSU 1101
 - Second Semester 20 students participate in the Lobo Leadership Academy
 - Third Semester students assigned as peer mentors for SRSU 1101
 - Fourth Semester students work with Enrollment Management as they shadow Lobo Ambassadors. Campus tours and marketable skills
 - Fifth Semester-graduation-Students become interns-3rd and 4th year internal internship-guarantee them work with administrators, Academic Retention Administrators and other staff and faculty. This gives them skills they can learn for job interviews. Connecting with students for success/initial pilot-retention rate increase 57 to 67%. There is a correlation between all the different efforts around campus. We are starting with freshmen. This is their family, and this is their home. It takes a campus to graduate a student!
- What will we be doing with sophomores?
 - Getting them major-identified. We will be making sure they have their 30 hours. Identify themselves as sophomores who belong here. One of the difficulties we have here is that technically many of the freshmen are not sophomores in the second year because of dev ed. We have a lot of third semester freshmen.
 - Make sure they have sound financial support.
 - Strong connection with faculty.
- Dr. Hernandez mentioned that all faculty mentors should know what the enrollment status is for their mentees for the semester. We have the summer months that we can leverage to the faculty mentors, so they have some actionable data. His concern is that not all faculty mentors are as engaged as Dr. Stein is, so they may not check their individual mentee status and this report will get pushed to them.

- On thing Kathy does is sends activities on campus to the mentees. Remind students that there is something to do.
- Is there an opportunity to involve staff to be mentors? If we can expand the program, then we will need more mentors. We will need to go just beyond faculty.
- If we can get coaches to provide peer mentors, that would be great. Most student athletes do work, so Amanda is not sure why they may be saying that they don't work.

Electronic Resources Provisioning

- Dual Credit—looking at issues with how they can access Sul Ross electronic resources. The issue they are having is that adjunct faculty or ISD teaching partners are not able to access Blackboard and emails prior to the semester. Tim went to training in Eagle Pass, and they were unable to get onto Blackboard. Missing out on emails that are sent to faculty. They aren't officially employed yet, so they miss out. They are missing emails that are sent to faculty all. Some only have one semester end date, and then they can't get the info. They start in the fall.
- Is there a way that we can get electronic resources turned on early and approved for about a 2-year period? At the end of each year or the 2-year period, the deans receive a listing of the adjuncts that are expiring this year and are asked if they should be renewed for another two years.
- One workload for onboarding for these faculty before the semester starts. How do we renew them?
- Karlin from HR mentioned that they cannot add someone as an employee until they have I9 information. We have other partners that could identify the documentation, but HR cannot add them into the banner system until they have the completed paperwork. HR sets the first date of employment as the date the I9 has been completed. Then, the employees email generates immediately. The problem is getting the I9 documentation.
- Jacob said that the OIT part is driven by the date of hire and termination date in banner.
- Karlin mentioned that HR changed process and they no longer include an end date for adjuncts. She waits until the next long semester and runs a report, so she doesn't hinder the access for people.
- What is the process for collecting the identity details for the creation of emails? People Admin sends the emails to new employees providing new employee information, such as their new email address. They have discovered that some are not being sent, so now Karlin sends them manually to the new employees.
- Deans need to work with Julie Vega and with Dual Credit Faculty to process the I9 so that they will generate the email to have access to our systems. That should be our message to these new faculty. Yes, they need to complete, and HR will send the information to their personal email.
- Ex. If we have an adjunct starting in the fall, there is no end date? Correct, when the TEF comes in from the hiring department stating the end date, then HR will add the end date.
- Deans will need to message the adjuncts and ask them to complete onboarding ASAP.
- Retired faculty no longer receive all-faculty emails. Are emeritus faculty and retired faculty still on the faculty all list? No, they are not in the all-faculty email listing as of today. The HR system has a different designation. Retirees have a different designation. Retirees retain their email and receive emails from the retiree network but will no longer receive faculty or staff emails.
- No there is not a retiree distribution list for emails.
- President asked that Jacob create a listing for retirees.
- Do we want faculty and adjuncts to be part of the FS-All? We need the part time in the faculty all distribution list, per Dr. Warnock.
- The faculty all email is only for full-time faculty. There is currently an adjunct list. Bonnie did not know that there was an adjunct list.

- Useful if Jacob gave us the listing of distribution group.
- President feels it would be useful to change the descriptor and rename the listing to full-time faculty and for the part-time faculty.

Campus Community Garden

- Kelsey and Dr. Warnock have reached out to our local master gardeners. The plan to get a nice plan driven by local gardening knowledge. It will look nice and functional. Learning how to garden in this area.
- President volunteered an alternate site for consideration: by the president's house, there is a fenced in garden. Relatively small and may not be what they are envisioning, but it already has water and is fenced off.
- Over the summer, when students come back in the fall, they will have a plan of where the garden will be. They can get some fall crops planted. Then in the spring be able to plant spring crops.

Adopt a Spot

- Need to identify some locations to target for the cleanup program and the keep the bed beautiful program.
- Next step is the campus map identifying with locations.
- Some areas don't need beautification; they just need maintenance and cleaning. Example: around the museum it has become weedy.
- Can we get someone to adopt the space by the museum to keep the plants alive and weed free.
- Questions that Dr. Warnock has:
 - Where is a good home for this program?
 - Who will be administering this program?
 - Maybe get community members to help with the garden. Who takes ownership of the adopt a spot program?
 - What office do they go to sign up for the adopt a spot program?
 - Who will print the signs out? She is hoping that during the summer she can work with Physical Plant to figure these questions out.
- Ben mentioned that they can provide the tools. Making sure that they are held accountable for their areas. Get a confirmation that they touched that area this month.
- Dr. Warnock mentioned that they will have good student participation in the fall.
- President asked Ben to work with Bonnie Albright and Bonnie Warnock to pull off this plan.
- President received email after graduation-remarked about how horrible the landscape conditions are next the housing.
- With class 1101 and campus cleanup, this would be a good area for the adopt a spot.
 - Helping campus look better.
 - Will become a retention and engagement piece.
- Dr. Igo, with approval from Bonnie, wants to have a blue bonnet planting class. They will be planted at the RAS between the sign where you turn in and the concrete where irrigation ends. Dr. Warnock's office will purchase the blue bonnet seeds from their budget. Hopefully, the students can plant them in the fall, rake them in. Then in the spring, they will see the results of that.
- Dr. Igo also spoke with Mayor Eaves and with Adalena regarding spots around town.
- Once blue bonnets are established, then they reseed themselves. They spread also. They are annuals.
- They will be planning the classic Hill Country blue bonnet (short ones).

- They reached out to TX Master Naturalists group. They are like the TX Master Gardeners Group.
- Do we want to open up to the community for volunteer hours, such as the TX Master Naturalists Group?

OIT Policies

- Bonnie Albright rolled out a series of OIT policies in February for review. The policies were emailed back to you. We did not record approval of those policies, even though it was asked if there were any objections.
- President asked if there were any objections on moving forward with the OIT policies? **None- OIT policies approved.**

Office of University Equity and Inclusion

- The Office of University Equity and Inclusion was sunsetted in August of 2023 and then transitioned into the Office of Multicultural Affairs. However, it has not been technically enacted.
- Because of SB17, it needs to be sunsetted altogether.
- Unless there are any objections, that will need to be sunsetted at this time. **No objections-Approved**

Communication Strategy with Staff

- Betse-During the Staff Council Meeting a couple of weeks ago, staff appreciated the president's and Bonnie's attendance. They would like different administrators to attend future meetings.
- Two meetings for all staff each semester, one in summer.
- Betse asked what they meant by lack of communication. Example: They read about the purchase of the buildings in the paper. They did not receive the information from campus.
- We, in this room, need to schedule meetings with department/division structures and make sure that the message is the same from each of us.
- Risk with relying on this communication strategy-not every message will be delivered with the same tone or content all the way down. It is a pathway towards increasing communication. It raises the general knowledge.
- EC minutes will be posted:
 - .
- Dr. Warnock hears from her staff about communication-if something changes, they don't receive the information. Example: Mileage rate changed. Lonora turned in a travel voucher and it was denied because she did not know that the mileage rate had changed. It was never communicated to anyone by the purchasing office. Betse had a similar experience with meal receipts.
- We need to figure out how to convey those processes to everyone.
- How often do people check their email? We have ours open all day long. It is a priority. This is how we communicate in business.
- If we are going to use Staff Council meetings to communicate with them, then we, as administrators, need to give them the time and encourage them to go to the meetings.
- Bernie feels that it is important to publish the minutes. It is not just about communication; it is about transparency.
- Ben mentioned that sometimes people misconstrue things. His division has meetings twice a month. Everyone is invited, from the admins to directors. Even from there, things have gotten twisted.
- Bernie mentioned that this is why we must go over the minutes

- President said that it is everyone's personal responsibility to keep engaged and informed. Example-A year ago, President asked Betse to work on a newsletter. She worked on it diligently for a year and she was tracking how many people read it. It turned out to be less than 10% of people reading them.

West Texas Water Research Center

- Update-great water in the desert conference in January. Based on that, he was tasked to get money and to prop up a center. Tentatively calling the center West Texas Water Research Center and will be housed under BRI as an incubator. This was the directive of the funders.
- Secured over \$400,000 pledged toward this; actually, a challenge grant of \$375,000
- Trying to get the other match to get this center rolling.

Room & Facility Reservation Policies & Practices

- Dr. Warnock would like clarification; trying to understand different levels.
- Lonora received an email saying that if an academic unit or a unit on campus is co-sponsoring an event, they will need to complete the internal transfer to pay for half of the rental space. She does not know where the transfer of funding will go-who's budget?
- She did not know there was a policy. Usually when we co-sponsor, we say that this is very important for our program by bringing in an outside entity. We are renting the room and Texas Parks and Wildlife will be conducting a training. We will have some of our students there to network. Even though TX Parks and Wildlife is doing the training, she feels like it is important to have them on campus.
- When we are trying to work with partners (4H) we are trying to host on campus, but our legal documents and the Texas A&M legal documents aren't matching up. The Dean's office has reserved the Arena and not Texas AgriLife for the 4H.
- What are the policies? How do we approach this? When does her academic unit need to make the internal transfer to who knows where? When is it appropriate? Does the money go to Communications or IT because we are asking Dominick to come in for support? Or does the money go to the Arena? How do we go about reserving the spaces and paying for the spaces?
- Per Ben, what prompted Internal Auditor did an audit and uncovered elements where individuals from outside were coming and partnering with the partners. Fees were being charged and not everything was being disclosed. Someone else was making a profit from us. That prompted her to stick to the APM and to the policies in there directly.
- In doing so, that hurts 4H and FFA. Our legal counsel says that we will not sign TX A&M's documents if they come to our facility. We should not be hurting or eliminating your ability to bring in those groups. There should be a mechanism where we won't encumber a charge for the use of Espino or for the SALE Arena that benefits the university. We can do that through a waiver if we justify it.
- We now must pay for the use of the Museum-The Museum is different. It was built with private funds/donations. The Museum depends on the funds for daily operations. The old part of the museum was not being charged; it's the new event center where we will need to pay rental fee.
- Two reasons for charging at the Museum Event Center:
 - 1. Need revenue
 - 2. We don't want it to become the default location for every single event on campus. To the exclusion of internal use, it will generate revenue. The only way to get there is to charge everyone a standard fee, whether internal or external.
- All other spaces, Espino, etc. are governed by the Student Life Dept. Those have a pathway to the waiver.

- Does each office need to complete the waiver every time? Do the Range and Wildlife Club need to fill out the waiver for the Commons for a meeting? Does the Dean's Office need to complete the waiver all the time?
- Per Suzanne, there is a request for using it for club meetings. There will be no fee for holding a club meeting. There are forms that need to be completed, like the waiver form for the 4H.
- General Rule: General campus use, you complete the Facility Request Form. We need a central clearing house, which is the Campus Activities Office. We need the clearing house to determine whose calendar we use. Bigger stuff, speak to Campus Activities.
- Ben says that it assists us with accounting. Recently found elements that weren't disclosed to Campus Activities and were generating revenue.
- Dr. Hernandez said that we need to look at policies, procedures, and forms that we have published. Please put a work committee together of those that manage spaces on campus, including the museum. The museum needs to have its own set of policies. This way, we can review them all for consistency. Work with OGC to resolve any use and liability waivers. Develop a form.
- Per Dr. Warnock, TX A&M said that there is a paragraph in our documents, that they cannot legally agree to. If they must sign our paperwork, then they are saying we will need to sign their paperwork saying that we will not hold them responsible.
- Maybe we have a separate form for private users and state agencies.
- The form says that that everyone that attends the event will have a background check.
- Per Ben, this is the new updated facility form that legal counsel has asked us to start using, in the last 3 or 4 months.
- There are elements in the agreement that ask for a background check. Dr. Hernandez is asking why it is in the agreement. It should be taken out. We cannot require people to sign this agreement with a requirement that we say we don't need.
- Bonnie has already submitted the request for 4H to use the indoor and outdoor arena. We will make sure that all parents sign forms for minors.
- Background checks for all attendees will not happen. It is not realistic and should not be in the contract.
- Per Dr. Hernandez, they will work on clarifying the policies and clarifying the forms and creating a flow-chart of when things are required and when they are not.
- Once exception to the free use policy that may be incorporated into the Facility Use Agreement: It is free so long as the space is used in the condition that it normally exists. If a user starts requesting different set up, then those should be additional costs because the university is going to bear additional costs.

Enrollment Report:

- Summer enrollment looking good at RGC-We are almost breaking even. There are still two or three weeks left before the summer semester begins for the opportunity to register more students.
- University wide we are up around 7% in headcount. A little less in SCH. Really positive growth. We need to recover some of the growth we lost last summer because summer is the start of the base period for formula funding.
- As we recall from the last EC meeting, Greg gave us the presentation. The base period for the last formula funding model was summer of 2022. That is really a benchmark that we need to get back to.
- In Alpine we are close, at RGC we are away from that.
- In terms of fall, Natalie has brought him some data.

- 750 students applied for dual credit and Admissions is working through a list to admit them. We won't know until maybe early June how many have enrolled.
- Year after year, we are going to report growth from 50 students to over 800 students. In terms of regular undergraduate student enrollment, those numbers look positive.
- 25 students from our surrounding areas have been nominated for the Presidential Scholarship. Natalie will be working on getting their financial aid information and awarding them sometime in June.
- We picked up 5 new nursing students for a total of 7 that were awarded by Big Bend Regional Medical Center. Two students are continuing students and are not new: a rising sophomore and a rising junior. We also have 5 brand new students. In total, that can be up to 30 scholarships that will be either full or partial scholarship students.
- Rodeo-looking at picking up between 20 and 30 new students.
- Athletics-shrinking a bit, but intentionally. We still have 21 athletes who have not started their applications.
- Hopefully we will start monitoring persistence to registration for the mentee students. This will give us an indication of returning students from priors and how it affects total enrolment.
- We need to get a better understanding of the general student population. Not scholarship, rodeo, or athletes; all other students that are in the applicant pool for undergraduate admissions. We have seen an increase there too.
- There is a dashboard in IR that gives us applicant to completed applications to admitted status to enrolled status for all students with a Fall admission target date. The good news is that total applications and completed applications are both up. Admitted students are up now. But may be a timing issue.
- Total overall admittances are going to be up over the last year. We have under 1,000 students that were admitted and we achieved about a 26% yield in enrollment. The average from the last two years is 30%, so if we can hit that that, we will be at 300 students-a big class.
- If we hit 300 this fall, plus if we retain the mentees, this will give us a good bump in undergraduate enrollment.
- Graduate enrollment is still too early to tell if it is going to grow or stay flat. Spending a lot of marketing money to try and grow that number for the fall.
- Do we have numbers of students that are PELL eligible? Natalie said about 80 to 90%.
- We have over 1900 financial aid ISIRS? accepted, and we should be packaging about 1,500 of them in the next couple of weeks. Out of the 1,500, there are both continuing and new students.
- There are about 900 ISIRS that are designated as freshmen. The problem is that this year they are labeled as just freshmen. They previously were able to distinguish if they were freshmen never attended before or freshmen who attended before. Now it just says "freshman". FA can pull the numbers and distinguish between the two.
- Amanda asked-What happens to someone coming in with a lot of dual credit? Are they considered freshmen? For financial aid, they are classified by the number of hours they have already received.
- FTIC-First time in college. Those are traditionally your true freshmen. Everyone else may be new to Sul Ross and considered a transfer student.
- Dr. Garza said that they already have some students from the Early College High School that come with 42 credits. If they enroll, with 42 hours coming from early college high school, they are considered FTIC. Their first year is considered FTIC. Early college high school and dual credit does not disqualify you from being FTIC.

- We are required to code those students as FTIC to become a cohort that measures for degree completion. Four-, six- and eight-year graduation rate is based on when the student was designated as first time in college (FTIC).
- Any student that goes from dual credit or an early college high school and attends the community college first, then comes to us, they are not FTIC. They are considered transfer students. Even if they take one class at the community college, they lose their FTIC status when they come to us.

The Chronicle of Education Article

- It is written by academics for academics. It says that the things that are out there are untrue.
 - . The recipients of this information, students, and parents, don't know if this is good or bad information.
- What we can do to affect that is:
 1. Every opportunity we have is to try and dispel some of those these myths, especially at Sul Ross State University. The issue of costs and debt are not as relevant to our student population. Most public universities present a high value proposition: non-funded cost is relatively low, especially if you have demonstrated financial need.
 2. Things we can do to improve student persistence, student engagement and recognition that education is valuable. It focuses on making the transfer/admission experience frictionless— Ours is currently full of obstacles. We must get better of moving those. Both bureaucratic hassles and academic hassles
- The President received a call from someone who just finished his MBA. He was working with an MD in Zapata and convinced him to enroll in our MBA program. The doctor did not enroll at SRSU and enrolled with TAMU instead. We conditionally admitted him into the MBA program because he lacked one or two accounting classes. President doesn't understand why we reject him, and TAMU says come on in. How do we eliminate these academic and administrative obstacles because we are hurting ourselves by restricting.
- Maybe we change the message from conditionally accepting them to accepting and then let them know that they need to complete these certain classes.
- Barbara did not know that the notes were communicated to the student. In EMP, she added that he needed the two courses. She thought the note was internal.
- Bonnie gave an example. Geology-bad about saying a student needs these particular classes, so they are admitted as "probationary admission". The registrar lets them know that probationary admission is about a student's GPA and not about any courses as the student may be missing. The registrar's office is not looking at whether a student has taken leveling classes, they are looking at GPA.
- What can be done for those students is fully admit them, add the courses that they need to their degree plan. The good news about that is if it is on their degree plan, they can receive financial aid because those leveling classes are part of their official degree plan.
- It all comes back to marketing. We make them feel less wanted.
- Those academic obstacles and bureaucratic obstacles hurt us.
- We need the students more than they need us because competition is getting tighter and tighter.
- 75% to 85% of individuals enroll in the first program that accepts them.
- We identified as part of the Enrollment Steering Committee (ESC) that part of what they need to work on is changing the culture. That culture is not only paralyzing internal staff, but also infecting our internal communications
- We can change those two things because it's our own environment.

3. We focus on great teaching. We do that all of the time. Most of our instructional activities are focused on great teaching.

General Info

- Date on calendar-Frist Sully Start-Up is on June 21 and is an in-person event. Natalie's concern is the food since Aramark will be unable to provide.
 - Also, the lack of participation across campus. She realizes that we may not be talking about them in these meetings, but we need to come together to help support these efforts. It is currently only Natalie, Nydia and Misela meeting about Sully Start up.
 - President said that we can cater the event and can overcome this issue.
 - Startup is for accepted students (New Student Orientation).
 - Only have 4 staff members that can register students from the Lob Den. Are there other advisors that can register them? Faculty do know how to advise students and can assist. The only issue regarding faculty advising is the TSIA requirements. If there is a list of those coming in, then they can make sure they have 1 or 2 potential schedules.
- President said that Dominick Percoco oversees the NTIA grant. This grant includes free laptops for students that have financial need. We are double checking to see if financial aid is a requirement. We could award them the laptop when packaging. The student would only need to complete the form.
- Excelencia Seal- Natalie, Kayla, April, Kathy, Jean. They have almost everything they need for the application.

Adjourned: 11:01 a.m.